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SUBJECT: CLIMATE CHANGE: OUTREACH TO HUNGARY ON U.S.
ENGAGEMENT IN DECEMBER NEGOTIATIONS

REF: A) STATE 119282 A) STATE 112885 (NOTAL)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Ambassador Foley delivered USG talking points on the 14th Conference of the Parties (COP-14) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to Hungarian Minister of Environment Szabo on November 20, and ESTH Hub Officer followed up with Hungarian climate change negotiator Tibor Farago on November 26. In both meetings, the GOH emphasized that tangible progress at the UN climate negotiations in Copenhagen is necessary to demonstrate to the public that leaders are serious about taking action to address climate change, and that a successful outcome cannot be achieved without U.S. commitments. The GOH agreed that key developing countries like Brazil, China and India must also be included in a way that does not compromise their economic development. The GOH suggested that it would be useful for either the U.S. or the UN to host a preparatory conference in the U.S. between the December 1-12 negotiations in Poznan and the targeted conclusion of international climate change negotiations in December 2009 in Copenhagen.

¶2. (SBU) While the Hungarian position does not oppose the USG's preference that COP-14 lay a solid foundation for Copenhagen without limiting the Obama Administration's options, our sense is that the Hungarians would prefer that the U.S. make firm commitments and that they hope to learn more in Poznan about the incoming Administration's policy position on climate change. End summary.

Meeting with Minister Szabo

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador Foley delivered USG talking points on COP-14 (ref A) to Environment Minister Imre Szabo in a twenty-minute meeting on November 20. Szabo mentioned that the attendees at the October 13-14 informal ministerial meeting to discuss outcomes of COP-14 hosted by Poland in Warsaw (ref B) are looking forward with high expectations to America's stance in Poznan. According to Szabo, the ministers in Warsaw all agreed that the U.S. has a decisive role on this issue. He commented that a preparatory conference in the U.S. sometime between the Poznan and Copenhagen negotiations, hosted by either the USG or the UN would be beneficial. The Minister emphasized that climate change is a global problem which requires a global response, and agreed with

the U.S. that key developing countries like Brazil, China and India must be included in the process in a way that avoids undue economic harm. Szabo noted that there is no consensus within the EU on issues such as the purchase by EU countries of rainforest land in developing countries to offset their emissions, and he did not comment on the expected EU position in Poznan. (Note: Tibor Farago, who represents Hungary at climate change negotiations, was in Brussels meeting with the EU and other member states on this subject on November 20. End note.) Szabo reported that participants at the informal ministerial in Warsaw commented that failure to make progress in Copenhagen will undermine the chances of implementation of commitments to address change made in Kyoto, and create the public perception that governments were not serious about these commitments. The Minister expressed his own belief in the need for a positive outcome in Copenhagen, noting that without the U.S. such an outcome could not be implemented.

Meeting with Tibor Farago

¶4. (SBU) On November 26, ESTH Hub Officer and ESTH FSN delivered the same talking points to Tibor Farago. Farago,s response to the talking points concurred with that of the Minister of the Environment. Farago opined that the internal EU disagreements on the details of the EU climate package will not have an impact on COP-14. He indicated that the EU delegations were interested in hearing what the official and

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"unofficial" U.S. delegations would have to say in Poznan. ESTH Hub Officer advised Farago that our understanding is that President-elect Obama will not have representatives at COP-14.

COMMENT

¶5. (SBU) The GOH position does not preclude the USG,s preferred COP-14 outcome of progress on laying the ground work for the 2009 negotiations in Copenhagen, without tying the hands of the new Administration. However, our sense is that the Hungarians would prefer that the USG make firm emissions reduction commitments in Poznan, and they will likely try in Poznan to find out more about the Obama Administration's plans on climate change.
Foley